Maxwell Air Force Base, Building 690
(Hangar 8)
255 East Ash Street
Montgomery
Montgomery County
Alabama

HABS No. AL-957-B

HABS
ALA
51-MONT,
1B-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Southeast Region
Department of the Interior
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, BUILDING 690 (HANGAR 8) HABS No. AL-957-B

Location:	255 East Ash Street Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama Montgomery North Quadrangle
Present Owner:	Maxwell Air Force Base
Present Occupant:	Base Recycling Center
Present Use:	Recycling Center
Significance:	Maxwell Air Force Base, Building 690 (formerly Hangar 8), was built in 1944 to accommodate and service a variety of aircraft. This hangar represents one of the last WW II expansion projects to take place at Maxwell Air Force Base. Building 690 is one of the few buildings from this era of construction to maintain much of its original architectural integrity.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Building 690, originally Hangar 8, was part of a World War II era construction program, even though Building 690 wasn't complete until 1946. During the War, Maxwell Field, as the Base was then called, became a major training center for pilots. Hundreds of buildings were built to accommodate the increased numbers of personnel, planes, and supplies needed to fulfill war-time requirements. Building 690 was one of the buildings built during this era. The cost of construction was $132,718.00.

Throughout its history, Building 690, originally known as "Hangar 8", functioned primarily as a transport type hangar. However, it was occasionally modified to accommodate additional usage. The Real Property Accountable Record (1946-1991) indicates the Hangar design and construction began in 1944 with construction being completed in 1946.

B-29 Superfortress transition training for pilots and flight engineers began at Maxwell Field in January 1945. The B-29 training necessitated an expansion program to build hangars large enough to accommodate the bombers. Hangar 8 (Building 690) was one of two hangars constructed at the east end of the flight line. Hangar 7, Building 689, next to Building 690 was completed on July 31, 1945. Hangar 8, Building 690, was completed after Hangar 7. The B-29s left Maxwell in November 1945 when they were reassigned to Texas. Hangar 8 accommodated the B-29 up until 1952. After that the building was used as a general transport aircraft hangar. A sea rescue squadron occupied the Hangar up until 1954 with specially equipped B-29's altered to carry large life rescue boats in the fuselage of the aircraft. After 1954, the Hangar had no specific responsibility to a particular aircraft. Then the building was utilized as an organizational maintenance hangar for all aircraft. The 908 Reserves used Hangar 8 as an avionics shop beginning in 1964.

Real Property Record (1946-1991) documents that Building 690 maintained the same square footage, 45,997 square feet, up until March 23, 1959. At this time, Building 690 was increased 229 square feet by a construction addition. This addition would increase the total square footage to 46,226 square feet. At the same time as this addition, there was a 20-ton air conditioner installed by the Air Force. A comparison between copies of historic photographs and a recent photograph shows that the exterior configuration of the building has only undergone subtle alterations. The same Real Property Record (1946-1991) documents numerous other installations and removal of various equipment.

The following chart displays all installation and removal of equipment pertaining to Building 690, originally Hangar 8. The following was acquired by the Real Property Record (1946-1991).

YEAR	INSTALLED	REMOVED	SUBJECT MATTER	SQ. FT.	COST
1958	X		Box Gutter	N/A	222.91
1958	X		Water Cooler	N/A	339.20
1958	X		Fan, Blower Type	N/A	104.50
1959	X		20 Ton A/C	229	15,911.22
1959	X		Wood Channel Plates	N/A	409.38
1962	X		Man Fire & Evac. Alarm	N/A	2,899.67
1962	X		Electric Power Station	33	177.99
1963		X	1 Kewanee Steam Boiler	N/A	1,152.00
1964	X		Asphalt Tile	1700	383.50
1965		X	8 Old Floodlights	N/A	280.00
1971	X		Electrical Alteration	N/A	5,189.00
1982	X		Window A/C Unit	N/A	1,308.91
1987	X		Heat Detector	N/A	233.78

In 1975 Maxwell Air Force Base ceased to be a flying command. Shortly there after, Building 690 was no longer a fully operating hangar. The last aircraft to leave the fully operating hangar was a C131, a transport aircraft. In December of 1976, Building 690 was altered into a full gymnasium with basketball courts and bleachers. After this alteration by the Air Force, Building 690 was converted into a skating rink/storage area in the later part of 1978. This particular alteration consisted of placing portable barriers around the athletic flooring. Building 690 was at this time sectioned into halves. One portion was used for storage and the other portion was utilized as a skating rink.

Building 690 remained the same until 1991. The portion of the hangar that was used for storage was transformed into a recycling center. The skating rink portion remained the same. Building 690 is an operating recycling center still today and awaits its next purpose.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

Building 690 (originally Hangar 8) is a barrel arch truss roof structure housing a hangar. Floors and foundations are poured in place concrete. Exterior walls are built up with hollow tile, asbestos siding, gypsum board, and plaster. The other two sides are made up of twenty-four 13'-6 1/4" wide and 25'-10" high retractable doors for exiting and entering aircraft. Interior walls are plaster and concrete, or plaster, concrete, and gypsum board. There also are some wood stud walls that occur among the interior construction. The interior also includes handrails, window guards, thru-wall ducts, chain link divider fence with gates, exit ways in north and south lean-tos, ceiling light fixtures, emergency and exit lighting. The hardware used in the Hangar was a steel boiler, hot water heater, storage tank, duplex vacuum pump, radiator, and steam/return pipes. The roof was built up roofing over a gypsum board deck which was later replaced with steel decking. The main part of the roof consists of a curve rising at 32'-0" in 81'-0". At the peak of the curved roofing sits four 19'-0" long and 4'-0" wide ventilators, which were wood to begin with and later changed to similar metal vents. Other sections of roofing besides the curved section maintain either a five in twelve slope, seven in twelve slope or a flat surface. The trussed arch form is made up of individual bolted steel members. Bottom and top chords measure 6" x 4" x 1/2". These steel fabrications make up the overall arch. The roof also includes six inch purlins with four inch sub-purlins that hold up roof decking.

The Hangar is designed with twenty-three different rooms. Eleven of the twenty-three rooms were made into offices. The majority of the offices are carpeted with a corresponding rubber base. The walls in the offices are constructed of painted gypsum board. The ceilings in these offices are made up of acoustical tile. There also are two vestibules,one is located on the north wall and the other is on the south wall of the building. The flooring in both of these vestibules is made of vinyl composition tile, accompanied with a matching rubber base. The walls in both vestibules are constructed of gypsum board and covered with a vinyl wall covering. These two rooms also contain acoustical tile ceilings. Located on the west side of the south wall are two restrooms with porcelain tile floors. These restrooms also have a four inch wood base bordering throughout the restrooms. The walls in these two areas consists of a glazed ceramic tile wainscoat. The remaining top portion of the walls are painted in both restrooms.

The ceilings in these two bathrooms are also acoustical tile. The radio repair room contains a vinyl composition tile with a rubber base. The walls in the repair room are covered with a vinyl wall covering, and the ceiling was constructed of acoustical tile.The two reception areas have very similar interiors as far as their make up. Both have carpet with a rubber base, painted gypsum board, and a ceiling system of acoustical tile. The fuel room is an unpainted gypsum board room with a concrete floor built to accommodate large equipment. A storage room adjacent to one of the reception areas is nothing less than a little storage area with carpet, rubber base, painted walls, and an acoustical ceiling. The recycling center, and the roller rink are the two most spacious areas in the hangar. In these two areas the walls tend to vary due to the interior walls of the adjoining rooms. The recycling center has concrete flooring throughout. The roller rink is made up of an old gymnasium wood decking converted into a skating surface. In both the recycling center, and the roller rink the ceiling is exposed. Finally, the mechanical room is a small room located on the north wall of the hangar. This room is made up of a concrete floor and an exposed ceiling.

PART III. SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Maxwell Air Force Base
1946-1991 Real Property Record on file at Real Estate Department in the Base Civil Engineering Building, Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama.

Maxwell Air Force Base
1994 Air University Office of History, Rob Young, Deputy Historian, Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama.

Maxwell Air Force Base
42nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs Office, Building 804, 50 LeMay Plaza South, Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama 36112-6334

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

Mobile District Corp of Engineers contacted Seay, Seay and Litchfield, Architects/Interior Designers, P.C. in Montgomery, Alabama to prepare Historic American Buildings Survey and Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) Level I documentation for Building 690. The written history and description of Building 690 was prepared on January 12, 1995.